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ABSTRACT

This document is a collection of lessons for teaching a unit on ancient Chinese history. The unit focuses on a specific dramatic moment in history from which students can explore the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and their wider context in the great historical narrative. Continuing narrative provides the contest in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning point in history, students become aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. This unit's main focus is to have the students utilize their knowledge of Confucian thought by evaluating a fascinating historical figure, Wang Mang. Students study his success or failure as a Confucian ruler during his tenure as the Son of Heaven. Students predict, based on a careful reading of primary source materials, what might lead to Wang Mang's overthrow, and then judge him for his successes or failures as a leader. This unit contains teacher background materials, lesson plans, and student resources. The culminating lesson of this unit involves both a role play and a mock trial. Students gain skills in historiography and realize that history is a story well told, but much depends on who is telling it. (DK)

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WANG MANG: CONFUCIAN SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

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A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 7-10

By Joseph Palumbo
Teacher Associate, NCHS

The carriage of a medium grade official with an axe and two lances. Sometimes these vehicles were accompanied by runners carrying banners. Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick.

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
A Cooperative Research Program of the
University of California, Los Angeles,
and the National Endowment for the Humanities

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Finally, we acknowledge the continuing contributions of the National Endowment for the Humanities which established the National Center for History in the Schools in March 1988 and has generously supported this activity.

For information on additional teaching units and other resources from the Center, please write:

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APPROACH AND RATIONALE

By Linda Symcox

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching **Wang Mang: Confucian Success or Failure?**. Our units are the fruit of a year-long collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific "**dramatic moments**" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

In our approach, the continuing narrative provides the context in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning-point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our dramatic moments are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **first-hand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a **second-hand** account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very

nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to re-create for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans** with **Student Resources**. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or

cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography for the unit.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for an in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real-life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction, rather than rote memorization.

A DRAMATIC MOMENT

October 4 Ch'ang-an Entered

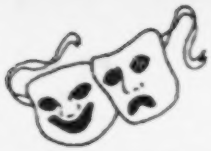
In the tenth month, on [the day] **mou-shen**, *the first day of the month, the troops entered by way of the Hsüan-p'ing City Gate, which among the common people is called the Capital Gate. Chang Han was inspecting the city gates, happened upon the troops, and was killed. Wang Yi, Wang Lin, Wang Hsün, Tai Yün, and others separately led troops to resist the attack outside the Northern Portal [of the Palace]. The Han troops were ambitious for enfeoffment [in reward for killing Wang] Mang and more than seven hundred of them fought strenuously. When it happened that the sun went down, [the people in] the government yamens, the lodges [for the commanderies and kingdoms], and the residences [adjoining the Palace] had all run away and fled.*

October 5 The Palace Set on Fire

On the second day [of the month, the day] **chi-yu** *some young people from within the city [of Ch'ang-an], Chu Ti, Chang Yü, and others, who had feared that they would be kidnapped or robbed, and had shouted vehemently in response to [the invaders], set fire to the Artisans' Chamber Gate [an inner gate in the northwestern part of the Wei-yang Palace], and hacked open a side door of the [Hall] of Reverence for the Law, calling out.*

"You rebellious caitiff, Wang Mang,
Why do you not come out and surrender?"

The fire reached to the Ch'eng-ming [Hall] in the Lateral Courts, where the Princess of the Yellow Imperial House dwelt. [Wang] Mang fled from the fire to the Hsüan Room, and the fire in the Front Hall immediately fol-



lowed him. The Palace Maids and women wailed, saying, "What must we do?"

At that time [Wang] Mang had on uniformly purple garments, was girded with his imperial seals and apron and held the Lord of Yü, [Shun's] dagger with a spoon on the end of its hilt; an Astrological Gentleman held a diviner's board before him, and for the day and hour he added [the appropriate] layout [on the board. Wang] Mang had turned about his mat and sat according to [the position] of the handle to the [Heavenly] Bushel, saying, ("Heaven begat the virtue that is in me. The Han troops—what can they do to me?")

Oct. 6 Wang Mang Flees to The Tower Bathed by Water

For some time, [Wang] Mang had not eaten, which had lessened his energy, so that he had become exhausted. On the morning of the third day [of the month, the day] keng-hsü, when it was light, a group of courtiers supported [Wang] Mang from the Front Hall southwards down the Zanthoxylum Stairs, and westwards out of the White Tiger Gate. The Duke of Peace to [the House of] Hsin, Wang Yi, had charge of the chariot and drove it outside the [Palace] Gate. [Wang] Mang went in the chariot to the Tower Bathed [by Water], intending to rely upon the water of the pond [as a magical defence], and planning to hold in his arms the mandates [given through] portents and majestic tou-*[measures]. The ministers, Grandees, Palace Attendants, [Attendants of] the Yellow Gate, Gentlemen, and Royal Retinue, who were still more than a thousand persons, followed him.*

Wang Yi had been fighting day and night and was extremely fatigued; when his men had almost all been killed or wounded, they galloped into the Palace and, by

a difficult and roundabout route, reached the Tower Bathed [By Water. When Wang Yi] saw his son, the Palace Attendant, [Wang] Mu, taking off his robes and bonnet, with the intention of escaping, [Wang] Yi scolded him, ordering him to return, [so that the two], father and son, together defended [Wang] Mang.

When the men of the army entered the [Palace] Halls, they called out, "Where is the rebellious caitiff, Wang Mang?" and a Beauty came out of a room and said, "He is in the Tower Bathed [By Water]." The bands of soldiers pursued after him, and surrounded it several hundred deep. Those on the Tower also exchanged shots with them, using bows and crossbows, but gradually dropped out and left [off shooting]. When their arrows were exhausted, so that they had no way of returning shots, they met [the attackers] with their short weapons. Wang Yi and his son, [Wang Mu], Tai Yun and Wang Hsün, died fighting, [whereupon Wang] Mang entered the room [on top of the Tower]. In the very late afternoon, the bands of soldiers went up the tower. Wang Yi, Chao Po, Miao Hsin, T'ang Tsun, Wang Sheng, the Regular Palace Attendant Wang Ts'an and others all died on top of the Tower. Tu Wu, a man from [the prefecture of] Shang, killed [Wang] Mang and took his [seals] and cords. A Colonel from Tunghai [Commandery], Kung-pin Chiu, who had formerly been a [Gentleman] Dealing With the Rites, [a subordinate of] the Grand Messenger, saw [Tu] Wu and asked him where the owner of the sealcords was. He replied, "In the room, in the northeast corner." [Kung-pin] Chiu recognized [Wang] Mang and cut off his head. The men of the army cut [Wang] Mang's body to pieces. His members and his flesh and bones were sliced and divided. "Those who killed each other in the struggle [to secure parts of Wang Mang's body numbered] several tens of persons." Kung-pin Chiu bore [Wang] Mang's head to Wang Hsien.

DRAMATIC MOMENT

...[Wang] Mang's head was transmitted to the Keng-shih Emperor and was hung up in the market-place at Yüan. The people all together picked up [things] and threw them at it. Some cut out and ate his tongue.

Text: Reprinted as published in *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*, by Pan Ku. Translated by Homer H. Dubs. Copyright 1955, Waverly Press, Inc., New York. Illustration: Reproduced as published in *Everyday Life in Early Imperial China*, by Michael Loewe. Text (c) Michael Loewe, 1968, Line drawings (c) B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1968, London.

TEACHER BACKGROUND MATERIALS

I. UNIT OVERVIEW

This unit's main focus is to have the students utilize their knowledge of Confucian thought by evaluating a fascinating historical figure, Wang Mang. Students will study his success or failure as a Confucian ruler during his tenure as the Son of Heaven. Then students will predict, based on a careful reading of the primary source materials, what might lead to Wang Mang's overthrow, and then judge him for his successes or failures as a leader. The culminating lesson of this unit involves both a role play and a mock trial.

II. UNIT RATIONALE

Wang Mang's short but fascinating Hsin Dynasty provides students with an excellent opportunity to view a leader who attempts to implement Confucian teachings hundreds of years after Confucius' death. Through the use of both original Confucian writings and excerpts from the history of the Han Dynasty students will be able to apply what Confucianism says to the real-life situation of governance and judge its subsequent effectiveness. Using primary source materials the students will become members of co-operative learning groups to actively participate in both evaluating Wang Mang and judging his success or failure. This helps students see that historical "fact" is very open-ended and subject to values and opinion, (in fact, their own). At the end of this unit, students will have a more critical eye as to the history they read and its interpretation.

III. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit should be taught after the ideas of the "hundred schools" period have been studied. Students should be familiar with Confucius and Mencius and their main concepts for the improvement of society. Wang Mang's Hsin Dynasty is the "break" between the later Han and

the former Han and should be taught in that context. Wang Mang can be treated as an important figure worthy of study alone or you may want to use his Hsin Dynasty as an "exception" to the dynastic cycle.

IV. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. Students will become familiar with the events and conflicts during the Hsin Dynasty.

2. Students will become versed in Confucian thought regarding the role of good government.

3. Students will synthesize the above information and use it to evaluate the emperor of the Hsin Dynasty, Wang Mang.

4. Students will judge Wang Mang (through mock trial and role play) as a historical figure and determine the success or failure of his reign.

5. Students will gain skills in historiography and realize that history is a story well told, but much depends on who is telling it.

V. INTRODUCTION TO WANG MANG: CONFUCIAN SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

The reign of Wang Mang (9-23 A.D.) represents a break in the four-hundred-year rule of the Han dynasty. Inaugurated in 202 B.C., the Han dynasty had by the end of the first century B.C. nearly run its course. Inept and corrupt emperors did not attend to the affairs of state; eunuchs and imperial in-laws acquired unprecedented influence at court; state revenues and institutions were declining; landownership was becoming highly concentrated in

aristocratic hands, bringing hardship to the peasantry; and large-scale revolts were breaking out all over the country. The imperial family was losing its prestige, and prominent officials believed that it was losing its mandate to rule as well.

Wang Mang was a member of a powerful aristocratic family related by marriage to the Han imperial line. Widely known as a man of great Confucian virtue, he held a number of high positions in court, including regent to several underaged emperors. In 9 A.D., at the behest of the court ministers, he assumed the throne himself and inaugurated his own dynasty called the Xin, meaning "new."

A committed Confucian, Wang Mang believed that the only way to save the empire from the chaos of the time was to reinstitute the early Chou order (Zhou, 1122-256 B.C.) as described in idealized form in the Confucian classics. To that end, he declared slavery illegal, attempted to stabilize prices, changed the coinage, introduced tighter state controls of merchants and marketing, and reformed the salary system of officials, whose pay was now to vary from year to year depending upon the quality of the harvest.

His boldest and most controversial measure was his attempt to equalize the ownerhsip of land. He attempted to do so by first setting limits on the amount of land that any one family could own. The excess land was to be given away to peasant families who did not own enough. He eventually hoped to institute the equal-field system that supposedly had existed in antiquity.

Wang Mang's policies and programs, however idealistic, seriously threatened the existing social and political order. Officials resented their lowered salaries, and aristo-

cratic landholders feared the loss of their lands. The common folk suffered as well, not so much because of the ruler's policies, as because of a series of natural disasters, the effects of which Wang Mang was powerless to ameliorate. A serious drought afflicted the Shensi (Shaanxi) basin, where the capital city of Ch'ang-an (Chang'an) was located. Worse yet, in 11 A.D. the Yellow River overflowed its poorly maintained dikes, inundated the eastern portion of the fertile northern plain, and shifted its course to run south rather than north of the Shantung (Shandong) Pennisula (one of the river's periodic and disastrous changes of course in Chinese history). Untold thousands of people were killed or left homeless. A severe famine broke out, and food prices skyrocketed. Desperate refugees romed the land, many of them turning to banditry to stave off starvation.

In 18 A.D. widespread discontent coalesced into open rebellion led by a large peasant group called the Red Eyebrows. Their choice of red, the official color of the Han, reflected their desire for a return to that dynasty. In 23 A.D., the rebels stormed Ch'ang-an (Chang'an), broke into the imperial palace, and killed Wang Mang. Civil war then broke out among the Red Eyebrows and other rebel groups. Order was finally restored in 25 A.D., when a member of the Han imperial family vanquished his rivals and reestablished the Han dynasty, which was to endure until 220 A.D.

Subsequent Chinese historians vilified Wang Mang as a traitorous usurper who cloaked himself in the trappings of Confucianism merely to seize power and to enrich himself. Pan Ku (Ban Gu, 32-92 A.D.), the author of the History of the Former Han Dynasty, is a good representative of this view. Western scholarship has generally treated Wang Mang more kindly, viewing him as an idealistic intellectual who was genuinely committed to

Confucian reform and to alleviating the sufferings of the peasantry. But opinion is split on the reasons for the failure of his rule. Some scholars contend that Wang Mang eventually was corrupted by power and thus sowed the seeds of his own downfall. Others contend that his rule was doomed to failure from the outset because it so threatened the entrenched interest of powerful aristocrats and officials.

*The Chinese words are all in Wade-Giles. The pinyin equivalents are in parenthesis.

LESSON PLANS

1. **Wang Mang's Demise**

2. **The Story of Wang Mang**

3. **Students Put Wang Mang on Trial**

LESSON ONE

WANG MANG'S DEMISE

A. Objectives

1. Students will be "hooked" after hearing (or reading) the Dramatic Moment describing Wang Mang's demise, and want to know how something so violent could happen to the "Son of Heaven."

2. Students will begin their investigation of Wang Mang's demise as they investigate what a "good" ruler is according to Confucius and Mencius.

B. Lesson Activities (One - Two Days)

1. Ask the students for words that describe the emperor of China. (Write suggestions on board).

2. Read the dramatic story of Wang Mang's Demise aloud to the students. Stop at "Some cut out and ate his tongue."

3. Ask the students "How could it be that a Son of Heaven would have such an awful fate befall him?"

4. Explain that the purpose of this unit is to evaluate the story of Wang Mang and arrive at reasons for his fall from power.

5. Review with them their study of Mencius and Confucius and their belief in good government and just rulers.

6. Pass out *The Ruler's Handbook* and explain that the students are going to take the information and try to come up with a checksheet of what a "good" government and ruler would be like.

(At this point, depending on your class, you can follow different approaches.) Pass out **STUDENT WORKSHEET ONE** with the objective of having students fill it out based on the readings in *The Ruler's Handbook*. You can:

a. Answer numbers one and two on the board with the students, then allow them to work individually on the rest.

b. As a class discuss numbers one through ten on the board, allowing ample time for probing questioning and discussion.

c. Break the class into groups assigning specific question numbers to each group. The groups could report their individual findings on the board while the other groups listen and fill in their sheets, (i.e., ten groups of one question each, five groups of two or more questions each, etc.)

7. Once the worksheet is complete, the students will have a working method of evaluating good government according to the Confucian tradition which they can begin to apply to the story of Wang Mang.

8. Homework Assignment:

Using the final quote of *The Ruler's Handbook*, try to find a current-event story that is an example of the intent of the quote.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

Have the students read and paraphrase in their notebooks or learning logs the final quote on the last page of *The Ruler's Handbook*. Discuss as a class their individual interpretations.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

THE RULER'S HANDBOOK

"The truly great is he who is capable of rectifying what is wrong with the ruler's heart." [IV A:20]

I. PERSONAL QUALITIES OF THE RULER

Tzu Kung asked about the gentleman. Confucius said: "The gentleman first practices what he preaches and then preaches what he practices." [II:13]

Confucius said: "The gentleman reaches upward; the inferior man reaches downward." [XIV:23]

Confucius said: "The gentleman is always calm and at ease; the inferior man is always worried and full of distress." [VII:36]

Confucius said: "The gentleman understands what is right; the inferior man understands what is profitable." [IV:16]

Confucius said: "The gentleman cherishes virtue; the inferior man cherishes possessions. The gentleman thinks of sanctions; the inferior man thinks of personal favors." [IV:11]

Confucius said: "The gentleman makes demands on himself; the inferior man makes demands on others." [XV:20]

Confucius said: "The gentleman seeks to enable people to succeed in what is good but does not help them in what is evil; the inferior man does the contrary." [XII:16]

II. HOW THIS WILL INFLUENCE THE PEOPLE

Confucius said: "If a ruler himself is upright, all will go well without orders. But if he himself is not upright, even though he gives orders they will not be obeyed." [XIII:6]

Just so you genuinely desire the good, the people will be good. The virtue of the gentleman may be compared to the wind and that of the commoner to the weeds. The weeds under the force of the wind cannot but bend." [XII:19]

Confucius said: "Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties, and the people will try to keep out of jail, but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by the rules of decorum, and the people will have a sense of shame, and moreover will become good." [II:3]

III. WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO THE RULER

Mencius said: "There are three things that a feudal lord should treasure—land, people, and the administration of the government. If he should treasure pearls and jades instead, calamity is sure to befall him." [VII B:28]

If a king says. 'What will profit my kingdom?' the high officials will say, 'What will profit our families?' and the lower officials and commoners will say, 'What will profit ourselves?' Superiors and inferiors will try to seize profit one from another, and the state will be endangered... Let your Majesty speak only of humanity and righteousness. Why must you speak of profit?" [IA:I]

Mencius said to King Hsüan of Ch'i: "When the ruler regards his ministers as his hands and feet, the ministers regard their ruler as their heart and bowels. When the ruler regards his ministers as his dogs and horses, the ministers regard their ruler as a stranger. When the ruler regards his ministers as dust and grass, the ministers regard their ruler as a brigand or foe." [IV B:3]

Remember....
Mencius said: "States have been won by men without humanity, but the world, never." [VII B:13]

IV. WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT?

Mencius said: "[In the constitution of a state] the people rank the highest, the spirits of land and grain come next, and the ruler counts the least." [VII B:14]

Tzu Kung asked about government. Confucius said: "The essentials are sufficient food, sufficient troops, and the confidence of the people." Tzu Kung said: "Suppose you were forced to give up one of [these three, which would you let go first?" Confucius said: "The troops." Tzu Kung asked again: "If you are forced to give up one of the two remaining, which would you let go first?" Confucius said: "Food. For from of old, death has been

the lot of all men, but a people without faith cannot survive." [XII:7]

V. HOW TO WIN THE PEOPLE

Mencius said: "It was because Chieh and Chou lost the people that they lost the empire, and it was because they lost the hearts of the people that they lost the people. Here is the way to win the empire: win the people and you win the empire. Here is the way to win the people: win their hearts and you win the people. Here is the way to win their hearts: give them and share with them what they like, and do not do to them what they do not like. The people turn to a humane ruler as water flows downward or beasts take to wilderness." [IV A:9]

When men are subdued by force, it is not that they submit from their hearts but only that their strength is unavailing. When men are won by virtue, then their hearts are gladdened and their submission is sincere.

VI. HOW TO WIN THEIR HEARTS

As for the multitude, if they have no certain means of livelihood, they surely cannot maintain a steadfast heart. Without a steadfast heart, they are likely to abandon themselves to any and all manner of depravity. If you wait till they have lapsed into crime and then mete out punishment, it is like placing traps for the people. If a humane ruler is on the throne how can he permit such a thing as placing traps for the people? Therefore, when an intelligent ruler regulates the livelihood of the people, he makes sure that they will have enough to serve their parents on the one hand and to support their wives and children on the other, so that in good years all may eat their fill and in bad years no one need die of starvation.

Let poultry, dogs, and swine be kept and bred in season, and those over seventy may all be provided with meat. Let the cultivation of the hundred-mu farm not be interfered with, and a family of eight mouths need not go hungry.

VII. HOW TO KEEP THEM FROM HUNGER

When the land system is not in proper operation, then the well-field farms are not equally distributed among the farmers or the grain for salaries equitably apportioned among the ministers. So a wicked lord or a corrupt magistrate usually lets the land system fall into

disuse. When the land system is in proper operation, on the other hand, the distribution of land and the apportioning of salaries can be settled where you sit.

Each well-field unit is one li square and contains nine hundred mu of land. The center lot is the public field. The eight households each own a hundred-mu farm and collaborate in cultivating the public field. When the public field has been properly attended, then they may attend to their own work. This is how the countrymen are taught their status.

"The above are the main features of the system. As to adapting it to your present circumstances, it is up to you and your prince." [III A:3, 12-20]

VIII. ONCE THEY ARE NO LONGER HUNGRY

When Confucius was traveling to Wei, Jan Yu drove him. Confucius observed: "What a dense population!" Jan Yu said: "The people having grown so numerous, what next should be done for them?" "Enrich them," was the reply. "And when one has enriched them, what next should be done?" Confucius said: "Educate them." [XIII:9]

"Let attention be paid to teaching in schools and let the people be taught the principles of filial piety and brotherly respect, and white-headed old men will not be seen carrying loads on the road. When the aged wear silk and eat meat and the common people are free from hunger and cold, never has the lord of such a people failed to become king." [I A:7]

IX. IF THE RULER FAILS, IS NOT RIGHTEOUS, DOES NOT WIN THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS

"May a subject, then, slay his sovereign?" Mencius replied: "He who outrages humanity is a scoundrel; he who outrages righteousness is a scourge. A scourge or a scoundrel is a despised creature [and no longer a king]. I have heard that a despised creature called Chou was put to death, but I have not heard anything about the murdering of a sovereign." [I B:8]

X. HOW WILL HEAVEN INDICATE WHO IS TO BE THE NEW RULER?

[Mencius' disciple] Wan Chang asked: "Is it true that Yao gave the empire to Shun?" Mencius replied: "No. The emperor cannot give the empire to another." Wan Chang asked: "Who then gave it to him, when Shun had the empire?" Mencius said: "Heaven

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

gave it to him." Wan Chang asked: "You say Heaven gave it to him—did Heaven do it with an explicit charge?" Mencius said: "No. Heaven does not speak. It simply signified its will through his conduct and handling of affairs." Wan Chang asked: "How was this done?" Mencius said:..."Of old, Yao recommended Shun to Heaven and Heaven accepted him. He presented him to the people and the people accepted him. This is why I said that Heaven does not speak but simply signified its will through Shun's conduct and handling of affairs." Wan Chang said: "May I venture to ask, how was this acceptance by Heaven and the people indicated?" Mencius said: "He was appointed to preside over the sacrifices, and all the spirits were pleased with them: that indicated his acceptance by Heaven. He was placed in charge of public affairs, and they were well administered and the people were at peace; that indicated his acceptance by the people. Heaven thus gave him the empire; the people thus gave him the empire. That is why I said, the emperor cannot give the empire to another.... This is what is meant in the Great Declaration [in the Book of History] where it is said: 'Heaven sees as my people see, Heaven hears as my people hear.'" [V A:5]

Confucius said: "[A government is good when] those near are happy and those far off are attracted." [XIII:16]

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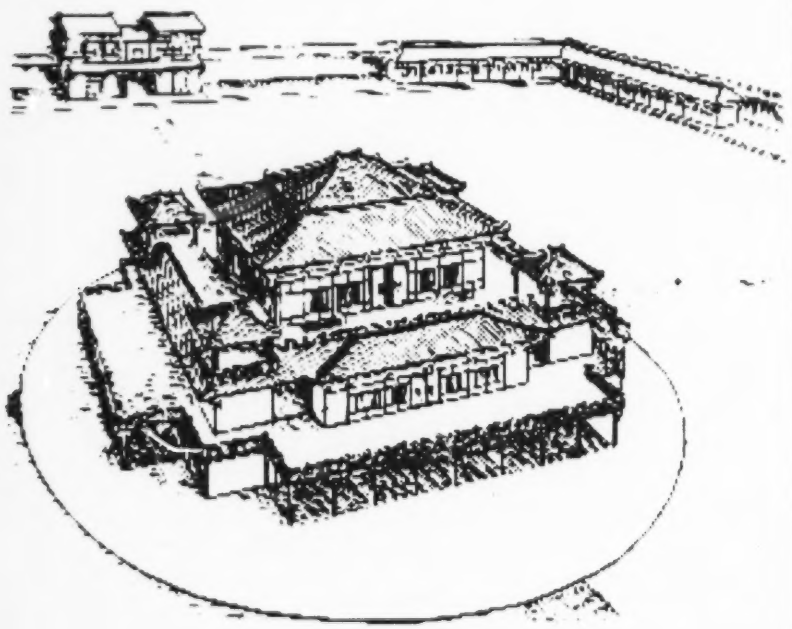


Reconstruction of a ceremonial building based on archaeological finds near Ch'ang-an. Reproduced as published in Everyday Life in Early Imperial China, by Michael Loewe. Text (c) Michael Loewe, 1968. Line drawings (c) B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1968, London.

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET ONE

1. What personal qualities should the ruler have?

2. How will this influence people?

3. What should be important to the ruler?

4. What makes a government good?

5. How does the government win the people's support?

6. How does the government win the people's hearts?

7. How does the government keep people from going hungry?

8. If the people are no longer hungry what should happen?

9. If the ruler is bad what should happen?

10. How does heaven indicate who is the new ruler?

LESSON TWO

THE STORY OF WANG MANG

A. Objectives (Two-Three Days)

1. Students will begin their investigation of Wang Mang's story by examining excerpts from the primary source document *"History of the Former Han Dynasty"* by Pan Ku.

2. Students will synthesize the material in the excerpts of the history with the concepts of good government as expressed in the writings of Confucius and Mencius.

3. Students will then evaluate Wang Mang based on the information they have synthesized on his conduct vs. the information on good government.

4. Students will discover that there is no "correct" answer thus far and that they need to do further reading to find out why the Son of Heaven met such a violent end.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Explain that because they have developed a framework for a good government and ruler, they can look more closely at Wang Mang and his history.

2. Explain that they will be reading English translations of Ancient Chinese histories with sometimes challenging language but only by investigating these documents can they unlock the true history of Wang Mang.

3. Divide the class into groups. Each groups should have a:

Recorder
Timekeeper
Reporter
Reader/Questioner

4. After the groups are formed, give half of the groups *Wang Mang's Personality* and the other half *Wang Mang's Policy.*

5. In their groups the reader/questioner should read the first selection of the history while the other students follow along. Then the reader/questioner should ask the question to the group and begin the discussion. The recorder should write down the responses in note form. The timekeeper will keep the group on task while reminding them of time limits (that you have set based on your individual class). The reporter will be responsible for reporting the group's information to the class.

6. Circulate around the room reminding them that they are responsible to the rest of the class to accurately provide the information.

7. As the groups finish reading their excerpts pass out the evaluations sheets, **WORKSHEET TWO** and **THREE**. Tell them as a group they should fill this out based on their discussion and the notes taken by the recorder, making sure they give specific reasons of support in the "why" section of their evaluation sheet.

8. When all the groups have finished the worksheets, have the recorder from each group report its finding and conclusions. At this point the teacher should record each group's remarks on the board (or overhead) in the following manner:

Did Wang Mang follow Confucian teachings?

Policies	Yes	No
1. Mandate		XXX
2. King Rule	X	XX
3. Rule by Example	XXX	
4. Keep from Hunger	XXX	
5. Keep the Faith	XXX	
Personality		
1. Calm & Ease		XXX
2. Virtue over Possession		XXX
3. Upright Fair		XXX
4. Virtue over Punishments		XXX
5. Treat Ministers		XXX

As each group reports, put an X under YES or NO so that each group's decision is posted. Your chart might look like the example above.

9. As a class, analyze the data collected on the chart. Discuss the question: *Did Wang Mang follow Confucian teachings?*

10. Groups that studied his <u>policies</u> usually will argue "yes," as Wang Mang made several attempts at proper Confucian government. Those that studied his <u>personality</u> will feel that he betrayed good Confucian conduct.

11. This division of opinion is <u>important</u> as it should demonstrate that historical "judgement" is affected by the perspective it is approached from, and that there is infrequently a "correct" answer.

12. Although those who studied his personality may not agree, we have no clear answer as to why he was so violently overthrown. This must come with further investigation of his history that will begin with **LESSON THREE**.

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET TWO

WANG MANG'S PERSONALITY GROUP

RULER TO BE EVALUATED — WANG MANG
AREA OF EVALUATION — PERSONAL QUALITIES (PERSONALITY)
NAMES OF EVALUATORS _____

The evaluators must conduct a careful study of the historical texts provided. Draw your own conclusions about the Son of Heaven, Wang Mang, based on the teachings of Confucius.

WAS THE RULER ALWAYS CALM AND AT EASE?

YES NO

PROOF...

DID THE RULER CHERISH VIRTUE OVER POSSESSIONS?

YES NO

PROOF...

WAS THE RULER HIMSELF UPRIGHT AND FAIR?

YES NO

PROOF...

DID THE RULER LEAD THE PEOPLE BY VIRTUE INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENTS?

YES NO

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET TWO

PROOF...

DID THE RULER TREAT HIS MINISTERS AS HIS HANDS AND FEET?

YES NO

PROOF...

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET THREE

WANG MANG'S POLICY GROUP

RULER TO BE EVALUATED WANG MANG
AREA OF EVALUATION POLICY
NAMES OF EVALUATORS _____

The evaluators must carefully consider the historical texts provided to us. Draw your own conclusions about the Son of Heaven, Wang Mang First Emperor of the Hsin Dynasty, based on the teachings of Confucius.

DID HE RECEIVE THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN IN THE WAY DESCRIBED BY CONFUCIAN THOUGHT IN THE RULER'S HANDBOOK?

YES NO

PROOF...

DID HIS POLICY OF ALLOWING NO OTHER PERSON THE TITLE OF KING MATCH WITH CONFUCIAN THOUGHT?

YES NO

PROOF...

DID HE PLAN TO RULE BY EXAMPLE SO THAT THE PEOPLE MIGHT LEARN FROM HIM?

YES NO

PROOF...

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET THREE

DID HE SEEK WAYS TO KEEP THE PEOPLE FROM HUNGER?

YES NO

PROOF...

DID HE SEEK TO KEEP THE FAITH OF THE PEOPLE BY NOT BECOMING GREEDY?

YES NO

PROOF...

LESSON THREE

STUDENTS PUT WANG MANG ON TRIAL

A. Objectives

1. Students will analyze the problems confronted by Wang Mang as described in the Book of History (**DOCUMENT B**).

2. Students will build a case for or against Wang Mang, (through participation in a mock trial) based on information and conclusions drawn from the book of history. They will attempt to answer the historical question of this unit.

3. Students will improve their speaking, listening and writing skills through active participation in the mock trial.

B. Lesson Activities (Four or Five Days)

*Note: At this point it is up to the teacher to decide which set of activities to follow. **Plan A** is a more traditional model for those who may not have the time for the mock trial, while **Plan B** is the more time-consuming but exciting activity.

Plan A

1. Explain to the students that Wang Mang is going to be tried on the charge of "Disservice to the masses due to his failure as a Confucian ruler." Tell the class you are going to read through the Book of History together, (**DOCUMENT B**) in an attempt to amass evidence that would find Wang Mang either guilty or innocent of the above charges.

2. Have the students read the Book of History/prob-

lems while answering the questions in the book of problems in their notebooks, or proceed orally through classroom discussion.

3. Create a T-graph on the board or overhead on which you and the class list evidence as to Wang Mang's guilt or innocence of the stated charges.

4. As a class, try to come to some type of verdict while reminding students that every historical opinion is valid so long it is supported by evidence.

Plan B

1. Divide the class into groups of four or five (as long as there are at least six groups total) and either assign them or let them choose whether they want to defend or prosecute Wang Mang on the charge of "Disservice to the masses due to his failings as a Confucian ruler." There should be three groups for the prosecution and three groups for the defense.

2. In their groups they should examine the book of problems (**DOCUMENT B**) looking for evidence they can use to support their position of guilt or innocence. i.e.: non-gentlemanlike behavior on the part of Wang Mang may be quoted by the prosecution, while natural disasters such as flood and locust infestation may be quoted by the defense. Hand out **WORKSHEET FOUR** to each student.

3. After the groups have had time to complete **WORKSHEET FOUR**, have all the defense groups move to one side of the room while the prosecution groups move to the other.

4. Pass out **BACKGROUND MATERIALS** to all stu-

dents and explain that now as large prosecution or defense "teams," they must decide what areas of the trial they want to be responsible for :

Opening Statement
Presentation of Evidence
Closing Statement

5. The time they need to prepare will vary based on how elaborate the students choose to be. When the cases are ready for presentation, allow the flip of the coin to see who opens first. Conduct the rest of the trial in the same order based on who began first.

6. It would be most exciting for the students if the verdict is decided by a jury from outside the classroom, possibly a group of teachers, or administrators, or most ideally, another history/social science class.

7. It is essential that students understand that no matter what the verdict may happen to be that there is no "correct" answer; that questions of history are open to many opinions, as long as they are supported by evidence. This is what makes history so exciting.

TRIAL OF WANG MANG

As a team, you are all responsible for Wang Mang's defense or prosecution. You should divide your energies among the three different areas you must cover for the trial. They are:

Opening Statement: You must get the judge or jury's attention. Explain why you think Wang Mang is on trial and what you hope to prove. Then explain in logical order what evidence or witnesses you will introduce in the trial to support your case. End assuring the judge/jury that when your team is done they will have no doubt concerning Wang Mang's guilt or innocence.

Presentation of Evidence: In a logical order you should explain, using any material you have been handed out during this unit, any fact, statement or event that will help you prove your case. Example: if you are trying to convict Wang Mang you want to mention any evidence you can find that shows he ruled contrary to the writings of Confucius. If you are defending him, find Confucian writings that support his actions as Emperor while also attempting to prove that much of his misfortune was out of his control (natural disaster, etc.)

The group may want to call up witnesses who knew or were involved with Wang Mang or you may want to re-enact certain important events of his reign. However, all witnesses and re-enactments must be supported by the facts that you get out of the readings. Anything that is pure fantasy will not be considered as evidence and will no doubt damage your case.

Closing Statement: This is simply a re-telling of your opening statement with the addition of any new information that came out during the presentation of a witness or a re-enactment. Remember that this is your last chance to influence the judge/jury, so be clear, logical, and convince them that your team is correct.

STUDENT RESOURCE: WORKSHEET FOUR

WANG MANG: CONFUCIAN SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

Defendant _____ **Your Position** _____

Evidence From Readings

How it Proves Your Argument

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-1

BOOK OF HISTORY
WANG MANG'S PROBLEMS

Hun Raids. [This was the Huns' reaction to losing the right to call themselves "King."]

When the Hun Shan-yü's [envoy, who had come to the imperial capital,] had asked for [the Shay-yü's] former imperial seal, [Wang] Mang had not given it to him, consequently [the Huns had] raided the border commanderies, killing and kidnapping officials and common people.

1. Why were the Huns so angry?

2. Do you agree or disagree with Wang Mang's policy in this area?

Corruption Increases. [This is the result of Wang Mang's attempt to have salaries based on the yearly harvest.]

The calculations of the taxes could not be made out, so that the official did not eventually obtain any salaries. Each one took advantage of the duties of this office to do evil, receiving and exacting bribes and presents in order to support himself. Because the officials of the [whole] empire did not receive their salaries, they all did evil for profit.

3. Why did a policy that seemed so good turn out so badly?

Economic Sufferings. [This was the result of Wang Mang's transition to the Ching land system.]

Merchants lost their occupations, food and goods were both rendered useless, and the common people even wept in the marketplaces and highways. Moreover those who were tried for buying or selling fields or residences, male or female slaves, or for casting cash, from the nobles, high ministers, and grandees down to ordinary common people, and who suffered punishment, could not be counted.

4. What do you think the mood of the peasants was?

In this year, the band of Ch'in Feng in Nan Commandery [numbered] almost ten thousand persons. Ch'ih Chao-p'ing, a woman of P'ing-yüan [Commandery], was capable at explaining the Classic on the Playing Blocks, using eight [blocks] to a throw. She also collected several thousand men in the difficult places of the [lower reaches of the Yellow] River. [Wang] Mang summoned and questioned his various courtiers about stratagems for capturing the bandits, and [the courtiers] all said, "These [people] are Heaven's [condemned] criminals and walking corpses. Their lives will [last] only an instant."

(This begins the story of Wang Mang's greatest challenge, the massive famine that struck China toward the end of his reign.)

5. Why do you think his advisors assured him that the bandits' lives "will last only an instant?"

6. How did Wang Mang feel about the bandits?

Bandit Extermination Ordered

Previously, because the four quarters [of the country] had all [suffered from] famine and cold, [the people] were impoverished and troubled, and so had arisen and become thieves and robbers, until gradually crowds gathered. They constantly thought that if the harvest would be good, they would be able to return to their native villages. Although their bands were numbered by the ten-thousands, [their leaders] only called themselves attendants upon great persons, Thrice Venerables, or Libationers. They did not presume to take or to possess cities or towns and went about foraging and seeking for merely what food they would use up daily. When various Chief Officials, Shepherds and Administrators all themselves fought with them in a disorderly manner, were wounded by weapons, and died, it was not because the bandits presumed to intend to kill them. But [Wang] Mang to the end did not understand the purposes of these [bandits].[emphasis added]

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-1

In this year, an Officer of the Commander-in-chief was in Yü Province, examining [into what had been reported in] a document, and was captured by the bandits, [whereupon] the bandits escorted and sent him to the county-seat. When the Officer returned and memorialized [his report], he wrote out the whole circumstance. [Wang] Mang became greatly incensed, and sent him to prison because he considered [that the man] was falsifying [the situation] to deceive [his superiors].

Thereupon he issued a message reproving the seven highest ministers, which said, "Verily, to be an official [means] to bring about order. To diffuse virtue and make favors manifest in order to shepherd the common people is the principle of benevolence. To repress the strong, control the wicked, and arrest and execute thieves and robbers are components of justice.

"Now however [the situation] has been otherwise. When thieves appeared, they were not immediately apprehended, so they were able to form cliques and intercept and kidnap Ruling Officers from [government] riding quadrigae. An Officer who succeeded in getting free from them moreover himself said senselessly, 'I questioned and reprimanded the robbers, [saying], "Why do you do this [robbing]?" and the robbers replied, "Merely because we are impoverished and in need." [Then] the robbers protected and set me away. At present, vulgar people who discuss [banditry say that the bandits] for the most part are like these [ones].'

"I reflect [that, when people], out of distress from famine or cold violate the laws and do evil, the greater ones become groups of thieves and the lesser ones steal [by making] holes [in people's walls]. There are no more than these two kinds.

"But now they have conspired together and joined to form gangs of thousands and hundreds. This is the greatest disobedience and rebellion; how could it be spoken of as [due to] famine or cold?

"Let the seven highest ministers strictly order the High Ministers, Grandees, Directors of Confederation, Leaders of Combinations, and 'the heads of offices' carefully to shepherd the good common people and hurriedly arrest and exterminate the thieves and robbers.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-1

"If there are any who do not, with one mind and with mutual assistance, hate and drive out the bandits, and, if they say unreasonably that [the bandits] have been caused by hunger or cold, they shall immediately be arrested and held in prison, and [the officials] shall beg [me to pass sentence upon] their crime."

Thereupon the numerous subordinates [of the ruler] feared all the more and none presumed to speak of the bandits' circumstances. They also were not permitted to mobilize troops unauthorizedly. Because of this, the bandits were not restrained.

7. Look at the indicated quote. What was Wang Mang afraid of?

8. Look at the indicated quote. What would happen to anyone who disagreed with his opinions of the bandits?

9. Evaluate Wang Mang's understanding of the situation based on the Confucian quote *"The gentleman makes demands on himself, the inferior man makes demands on others."*

Below Wang Mang makes an attempt to provide some relief:

Because the empire's grain was expensive, [Wang] Mang wanted to depress [its price]. For the Great Granary he established a guard with joined lances and named them Supporters of the Smaller Gate to the Beginning of Public Authority. The vagrant people who had entered the passes [of Kuanchung numbered] several hundred thousand persons, so [Wang Mang] established an Office for Maintenance and Relief, to feed them. [But] the commissioners who supervised and had charge of [the matter], together with the minor officials, together stole their grain allowances, so the seven or eight-tenths of them died of hunger.

10. Why did this plan not end up helping the hungry?

11. According to Confucian ideals, why would Wang Mang's ministers in charge steal the grain and ruin his plan?

"This is also a warning [from Heaven in that the breaking of] this bridge has placed a gap in the highway to the eastern quarter [of the empire]. Now in the eastern quarter the harvest has been lacking, the common people are starving, and the highways and roads are impassible [because of bandits. The Chief of] the Eastern Sacred Peak and Grand Master, [Wang K'uang] shall promptly [make] regulations for opening the various granaries in the eastern quarter and giving or lending to the distressed [people, in order] to apply the principle of benevolence.

A bridge to the Eastern regions was destroyed by flood. Wang Mang took this as a sign from Heaven that more aid must be sent to the eastern provinces to both defeat the bandits (red eyebrows) and try to end the famine.

In this month, the Red Eyebrows killed Ching Shang, the Second Brother Hsi to the Grand Master. (East of the [Han-ku] Pass, people ate each other.)

In the fourth month, [Wang Mang] sent the Grand Master, Wang K'uang, and the General of a New Beginning, Lien Tan, eastwards. When, outside the Capital Gate, they were sacrificing to the gods of the roads, Heaven [sent] a great rain which dampened their clothes, and the elders sighed and said, "This is because [Heaven] weeps for the army."

On the day the army left the capital it rained.

12. Why was this taken as bad luck?

Below is Wang Mang's words of explanation for the action he is taking:

[Wang] Mang said, "Verily, the distresses of the nine dry years conjoined with disastrous emanations have come to a climax in the past years, when withering droughts, frosts, locusts, and famines came as previously, so that the people are miserably poor, and wander scattered along the roads. In this spring, [the calamity] is especially pitiable. I have been very much saddened by it.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-1

"Now I am sending [the Chief of] the Eastern [Sacred] Peak and Grand Master, [Wang K'uang], who is a Special Advance and the Marquis as Recompense to [the House of] Hsin, to open the various granaries in the eastern quarter and give or lend to those in distress. On those highways along which the Grand Master and Highest Minister does not pass, he shall separately send a Grandee or Internuncio to open the granaries simultaneously, in order to preserve the great multitude.

"The Grand Master and Highest Minister, [Wang K'uang] shall thereupon, ...go to Yen Province, to pacify [the region] of which he, [the Grand Master], is in charge. Moreover those who formerly have been lawless and the bandits in Ch'ing and Hsü [Provinces] who have not yet completely dispersed or have later again assembled shall all be purified. I hope that thereby the myriad people may be pacified."

In hopes to end this struggle, Wang Mang sends two generals (Grand Master and New Beginning) and 100,000 soldiers to the East.

13. What are some problems that an army of 100,000 can cause the population?

The Grand Master, [Wang K'uang, and the General] of a New Beginning, [Lien Tan], together led more than a hundred thousand ardent soldiers, and wherever they went they did as they liked, so that the eastern quarter said about them,

"It would be better to meet the Red Eyebrows,
And not to meet the Grand Master.
The Grand Master can however [be endured],
[But the General of] a New Beginning would kill me."

[Thus] it was eventually as T'ien K'uang had said. [Wang] Mang also sent out many Grandees and Internuncios by divisions to teach the common people to boil grasses and [parts of] trees to make a vegetable juice, [but] the vegetable juice could not be eaten, and [the sending merely] made much trouble and expense.

14. Why do you think the poem above became very popular?

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-1

Previous to this [time, Wang] Mang had sent a Palace Attendant Within the Yellow Gate, Wang Yeh, to have charge of buying at the Ch'ang-an markets, and he took things at a low price from the common people, so that the common people suffered severely from it. [Because Wang] Yeh had achieved the merit of having economized expenses, he had been granted the noble rank of Sub-Vassal. [When Wang] Mang heard that in the city there was a famine, he asked [Wang] Yeh about it, and [Wang] Yeh replied, "These all are vagrants." Then he brought some millet mush with meat and thick meat and vegetable soup which were being sold at the market, and showed them to [Wang] Mang saying, "The food of all the resident commoners is like this, " [and Wang] Mang believed him.

Eventually the famine came to the capital.

15. Why did Wang Mang not know of the famine?

16. Can any conclusions be drawn from this?

In the summer, there was [a plague of] locusts which came from the eastern quarter. In flying they covered the sky. They came to Ch'ang-an, entered the Wei-yang Palace, and crawled in its Halls and Pavilions. [Wang] Mang sent out officials and common people and established bounties for those who seized and killed them.

This is to show that much of the famine was caused by locusts, drought, etc. These natural causes seemed to climax during Wang Mang's reign.

In desperation at his loss of control of the empire Wang Mang repeals the Ching land system and other laws that were "inconvenient" to the common people.

Not long after, the bandits, led by a member of the former Han Dynasty, stormed the capital and dispatched with Wang Mang as we read about at the beginning. The question before us now is why did this happen?

17. Wang Mang was a poor Confucian ruler who lost the mandate of heaven due to his lack of ability.

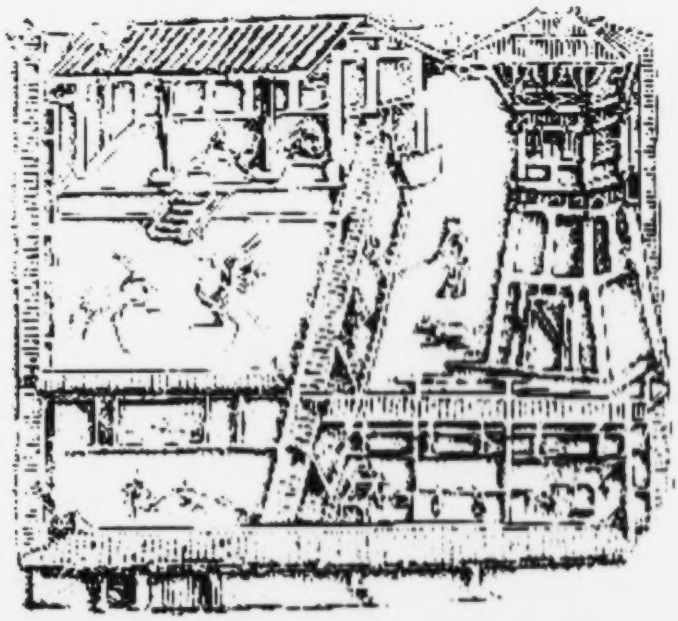
18. Wang Mang was a model Confucian who was beset by natural forces beyond his control.

19. Other?

More Defeats

The thieves and robbers in the four quarters, [whose bands] frequently [numbered] several ten-thousands of men, attacked cities and towns, killing [officials ranking at] two thousand piculs and under. The Grand Master, Wang K'uang, and others fought several battles, but unsuccessfully.

[Wang] Mang knew that the empire had gotten out of his control and rebelled,



Panoramic view of a homestead. The principal quarters on the left are reached through two courtyards. The domestic offices are separate, lying to the right and including a kitchen with tables and a wooden frame for hanging food and utensils. Beside the watch-tower a servant sweeps the courtyard and a dog is tethered. Reproduced as published in Everyday Life in Early Imperial China, by Michael Loewe. Text (c) Michael Loewe, 1968, Line drawings (c) B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1968, London.

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that matters were at a last extremity and some expedient was urgent, so he discussed sending the Grandee In Charge of Customs and Morals, Szu-kuo Hsien, and others, by divisions, to inspect the empire and to do away with the prohibitions against the ching [system of] cultivated fields, [private] slaves and slave-women, [free use of] mountains and marshes, and the [other] six monopolies, and that all the imperial edicts and ordinances since [Wang Mang] had ascended the throne, which were inconvenient to the common people, should be recalled.

Reprinted as published in the History of the Former Han Dynasty by Pan Ku. Translated by Homer H. Dubs. Copyright 1955, Waverly Press, Inc., NY.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-2

BOOK OF HISTORY WANG MANG'S PERSONALITY

WANG MANG'S TERRIFYING APPEARANCE

As a man, [Wang] Mang had a large mouth and a receding chin, bulging eyes with brilliant pupils, and a loud voice which was hoarse. He was seven feet five inches tall, loved thick-[soled] shoes and tall bonnets, and used clothes padded with felt. He stuck out his chest and made himself look tall, [so that he could] look down on those who were around him.

At this time, there was a person skilled in medical and allied arts who was an Expectant Appointee at the Yellow Gate. Someone asked him about [Wang] Mang's figure and countenance, and the Expectant Appointee replied, "[Wang] Mang is a person who may be said to have owl's eyes, tiger's jaws, and a wolf's voice. Hence he is able to eat people and is also due to be eaten by people." The person who questioned him gave information about [his reply, and Wang] Mang exterminated the Expectant Appointee and his relatives and rewarded the informer afterwards. Wang Mang regularly screened himself with a Mica Fan so that, except for his intimates, no one was permitted to have an audience with [see] him."

1. What do you think Wang Mang looked like?

2. What might the quote "he is able to eat people and is also due to be eaten by people" mean?
3. Why did Wang Mang have the people who said this killed?

4. What does this story tell you about Wang Mang's personality?

5. In Section I of *The Ruler's Handbook,* which quote about a ruler's behavior is the most opposite to how Wang Mang behaved?

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-2

The Flowery Baldachin Chariot

Someone said, "At the time of the Yellow Lord, he established the flowery baldachin in order that he might mount up [to become] an immortal." So [Wang] Mang had made a flowery baldachin in nine layers, eighty-one feet tall, with a golden claw-tip and feather covering, and had it borne by a carriage with a hidden mechanism and four wheels yoked to six horses and three hundred strong men with yellow clothes and [red] turbans. On the carriage there was a man beating a drum. Those who pulled it all called out, "He will mount up to be an immortal." When [Wang] Mang went out, he ordered [this carriage] to go before him. The many officials [however] said secretly, "This is like a funeral cart, not a thing for an immortal."

6. What do you think the chariot looked like?

7. Why do you think Wang Mang liked it so much and what does this say about his personality?

8. Find a quote in Sections I or III of *The Ruler's Handbook* that refer to a ruler's desire for possessions.

"Wang Mang was daily in the harem with persons versed in the magical arts...and others testing magical and technical arts and giving himself up to lustful pleasures."

9. According to this quote, what might life in the palace be like?

10. Find a quote in your *Handbook* that describes how a ruler's behavior may affect others.

[When Wang] Mang was waiting upon his wife in her illness, he saw this letter and became greatly incensed, suspecting that [Wang] Lin had some evil purpose. [Consequently Wang Mang] did not permit [Wang Lin] to join in the mourning ceremonies. After [Wang Mang's wife] had been buried, [Wang Mang] had Yüan-

pi and others arrested. They were examined and questioned, and they confessed everything about the adultery and the plans for [Wang Mang's] murder. [Wang] Mang wanted to have it kept secret, so sent to kill the commissioner [who had charge of] the case, ...and had him buried in the jail, so that his family did not know where he was. [Wang Mang] granted poison to [Wang] Lin, but [Wang] Lin was unwilling to drink it, so he stabbed himself and died. [Wang Lin was Wang Mang's son.]

11. What more personal qualities can you learn about Wang Mang from this story?

"An imperial grandson (of Wang Mang)...was sentenced (by Wang Mang) for having a picture of himself painted wearing the robes and the bonnet of the Son of Heaven...When this matter became known he committed suicide."

12. How did Wang Mang feel about the security of his position? How can you tell?

A.D. 20 Feb. 9. Executions Permitted At All Seasons

In [the period] Ti-huang, the first year, in the first month, on [the day] yi-wei, an amnesty [was granted] to the empire. [Wang Mang] issued a message, saying, "At the time when the army is being sent out and the troops are being put into motion, those who presume to run and shout, violating the law, should immediately be judged and beheaded. It is not necessary [to wait for] the season [for executions, winter]. When the year is up, [this order] shall cease." Thereupon during the spring and summer people were beheaded in the market-places of the capitals; the people were terrified and afraid and 'on the highroads and paths, they indicated their hatred [of Wang Mang] in their eyes.'

13. How by this ruling might Wang Mang be in violation of Section V of the handbook?

14. According to Confucian teaching why do Wang Mang's people have no sense of shame? (See Section II of handbook)

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-2

The Mad Woman

In this year, a mad woman of Ch'ang-an, Pi, called out in the roads, saying, "Emperor Kao is furious [and says], "Quickly return my state. If not, in the ninth month I will inevitably kill you. [Wang] Mang had her arrested and killed.

15. Explain Wang Mang's actions and what it tells you about his personality.

16. Does it seem that Wang Mang believed in rule by virtue or by force?

Officials Take Advantage of Wang Mang

[Wang] Mang's notion was that if institutions were fixed, the empire would naturally become tranquil. Hence he thought in detail concerning geographical arrangements, the institution of rites, and the composition of music. In discussing the harmonization and matching of the explanations to the six Classics, the ministers entered [his presence] at dawn and left at dusk. He discussed for successive years without coming to [final] decisions, so that he did not have leisure to examine law-cases, decide complaints of injustices, or to settle the urgent business of the common people, and when there were vacancies among the rulers of the counties, [Wang Mang left] for several years [officials as] acting [magistrates or as magistrates] concurrently [holding other positions, with the result that] the covetousness and injuriousness of all [his officials] alike daily became greater.

This selection from the history talks about Wang Mang's decision-making ability.

17. What was his ability like?

18. How did this hurt him?

Jan. 6. The Monopolies Upheld

Fei Hsing, the Director of Confidence in the Commander-in-Chief, was made the Shepherd of Ching Province. When he was asked at an audience what would be his plans of action when he reached his regional division, [Fei] Hsing replied, "The common people of Ching and Yang [Provinces] generally take advantage of their mountains and marshes in making fishing and the picking [of wild fruits] their occupations. Recently the state has set up the six controls, which tax [the products of] the mountains and marshes and have interfered with and taken away the profits of the common people. For a long time in successive years there have been droughts, so that the people are hungry and impoverished. Hence they have become thieves or robbers.

"When I, Hsing, reach my regional division, I intend to order and to make it clearly known to inform the thieves and robbers that they should return to their homes and I will lend them oxen for plowing, seed, and food, and exempt them from the land and [poll]-taxes. I hope that thereby I may be able to disperse and tranquillize them."

[Wang] Mang became incensed [at this proposal] and dismissed [Fei] Hsing from his office.

This story tells of an official who brings news Wang Mang does not like...

19. How does Wang Mang treat the official?

20. What does this tell you about Wang Mang's personality?

A Comet

In the eleventh month, a comet appeared in [the constellation] Chang. It traveled southeastwards for five days and disappeared. [Wang] Mang several times summoned and questioned his Chief Grand Astrologer, Tsung Hsüan, and various diviners. They all answered falsely, saying, "The astrological phenomena are peaceful and good, so that the many bandits will soon be destroyed." Thereupon [Wang] Mang [felt] a little more tranquil.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT B-2

This tells of how Wang Mang's officials felt that it was alright to lie to him.

21. Why did the officials think that it was okay to lie to the "Son of Heaven"?

22. Find a quote in Section III of your Handbook that describes how a ruler should treat his ministers (officials). How does Wang Mang compare to an ideal ruler?

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